

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church
other names/site number VDHR file no. 035-0420

2. Location

street & number Walker's Creek Valley Road (State Route 42) N/A not for publication
city or town Pearisburg X vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Giles code 071 zip code 24134

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide ☒ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of

___ entered in the National Register.

___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined eligible for the National Register.

___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined not eligible for the National Register.

___ removed from the National Register.

____ other (explain): _____

~~Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church~~

Name of Property

~~Giles Co., Va.~~

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)
count.)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

RELIGION

religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Wood

roof Metal
other Asphalt

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

1898

ARCHITECTURE

Significant Dates

1898

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved

Period of Significance**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**

Bane, George Lloyd (builder)

Walker's Ck. P. C. Ladies Aid Society

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ Other

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

Name of repository:

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Giles Co., Va.

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 0.1 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	514300	4116230	3	17	
2	17			4	17	

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>W. Ernest Miller and J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>				
organization		date	<u>March 15, 2003</u>		
street & number	<u>369 Walker's Creek Valley Road</u>			telephone	<u>(540) 921-2622</u>
city or town	<u>Pearisburg</u>	state	<u>VA</u>	zip code	<u>24134</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church</u>				
street & number	<u>Walker's Creek Valley Road</u>			telephone	<u>(540) 921-2622 (contact)</u>
city or town	<u>Pearisburg</u>	state	<u>VA</u>	zip code	<u>24134</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church is located in the scenic Big Walker Creek Valley in the southwest corner of Giles County, Virginia. The east-facing church stands on Walker's Creek Valley Road (State Route 42) in the village of White Gate. Across the highway flows Walker's Creek, a tributary of the New River. The one-story frame building was erected in 1897-98 and is Gothic Revival in style. Exterior features include a metal-sheathed gable roof, painted poplar weatherboard siding, a sandstone foundation, and an entry/bell tower in the reentrant corner of the L-shaped plan. The interior features decorative matchboard wall and ceiling sheathing and original pews. The approximately tenth-acre parcel on which the church stands is shaded by mature maples and has a pastoral setting. Adjoining the parcel on the north side is a one-story cinder block garage associated with a nearby funeral home. The closest part of the church cemetery, which is separate from and is not included in the nominated parcel, lies seventy-five yards to the southwest.

Exterior

The church is distinguished by its tall entry and bell tower, which features (from bottom to top) a weatherboarded square-plan base; a mansard-type roof with concave sides sheathed with shingle-pattern metal roofing; an open belfry; and a pyramidal roof with kicked eaves and asphalt-shingle roofing. On the east elevation of the tower base is an entry with two-panel two-leaf doors and a triangular peaked transom containing brown marbled stained glass (the same glass is used in windows throughout the building) and muntins forming a V pattern. In front of the entry are a concrete stoop and steps with a pipe handrail. The south elevation of the tower base has a tall two-over-two window with a triangular peak. The center muntin in the upper sash bifurcates at the top to create a V or Y pattern similar to that in the entry transom (the other windows have the same detail). The belfry has cross-bracing on the south, west, and north sides and struts on the east side, and all sides have saw-tooth vergeboards with turned pendants at the ends. The brass bell was cast in the 1870s and bears the names of ten founding women of the church: Frances McDonald Bane, Jenny Hite Bane, Lucy Baker Bane, Nancy Shannon Bane, Olivia Miller Bane, Nannie Bane Barbee, Cynthia Bane Francis, Mrs. J. M. Humphreys, Eliza Shannon Miller, and Elizabeth Bane Miller.

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Description (continued)

The windows of the main body of the church are like the one on the tower base except for the two windows on the east and south gable ends. These are larger and have Y-form mullions with X-form muntins in the small diamond-shaped windows in the crooks of the Ys. In the gables above, and in a third gable to the rear, are diamond-shaped louvered vents. Other exterior features include shingle-pattern pressed-metal roofing on the south, east, and north roof surfaces, corrugated metal roofing on the west roof surface, a brick flue for the original wood stove near the crossing of the two gables (no longer in use), a metal flue for an oil furnace on the north elevation, and a painted aluminum sign reading "Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church/Established 1873".

Interior

The interior contains two rooms: a vestibule at the base of the tower and a larger L-shaped sanctuary in the main body of the church. The walls of the vestibule and sanctuary are sheathed with painted reeded matchboards, and both rooms have tile flooring. On a wall of the vestibule is a 1952 bronze plaque commemorating the women who founded the church. The sanctuary walls are sheathed with light green painted boards installed in the 1960s over plaster and wallpaper. The wainscot has original stained vertical matchboards and the five-segmented canted ceiling also has the original stained matchboards. The level middle or top segment of the ceiling is comprised of rectangular panels defined by moldings and containing matchboards set straight and diagonally. Several tie rods span the ceiling and mid-twentieth century light fixtures are suspended from it. The altar is located in the northwest corner at the vertex of the south and east wings. It features a low dais with a curved corner and a wooden lectern supported by two stout turned legs. To each side of the lectern are book or candle stands on similar but single turned legs. The pews have slatted backs and simple shaped ends. The door and window surrounds have molded and reeded trim.

Integrity Statement

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church possesses good integrity. The church is virtually identical to its original 1897-98 appearance with alterations limited to later roofing materials on one roof surface and mid-twentieth century flooring, light fixtures, wall boards, and stained glass inside. Likewise, the building's lightly developed pastoral surroundings with level areas and hillsides in pastures and woods preserve their historic character.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church is a well preserved example of the stylish late nineteenth century churches that dot the mountainous landscape of Giles County, Virginia. The simple Gothic Revival church was erected in 1897-98 by local builder George L. Bane with assistance from the congregation and is the architectural reflection of its tight-knit rural community. The exterior is distinguished by an entry tower with an open belfry containing the bell from the congregation's original 1874 building. On the interior are a segmented canted ceiling and pews constructed by the church's Ladies Aid Society. A rehabilitation is planned to preserve this Big Walker's Creek Valley landmark.

Applicable Criteria

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church meets Criterion C and is eligible in the architecture area of significance as a representative late nineteenth century Giles County church with simple Gothic Revival attributes. The period of significance corresponds to the date of completion in 1898. The property is eligible at the local level of significance. Information in support of eligibility appears throughout the historic context.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Foremost among these was the owner of the property and the nomination's sponsor, the Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church congregation. The historic context is derived from W. Ernest Miller's report "History of Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church" (2003). Others who provided assistance included John Kern, Mike Pulice, and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The information in the historic context is derived almost entirely from church records.

Historic Context

The White Gate community, of which Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church is a part, was settled by James Bane Jr. in 1791. Bane named the area Rye Meadows but when the community received a post office in 1837 it was renamed White Gate. For much of the nineteenth century, the community's Presbyterian families worshipped at churches in

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Statement of Significance (continued)

adjoining counties such as New Dublin Presbyterian Church in Pulaski County and Kimberling Presbyterian Church in Bland County (three miles west of White Gate), and at Pearisburg Presbyterian Church in the Giles County seat. This changed on November 2, 1873, when a group of eleven women and two men met in White Gate's Walker's Creek Baptist Church to organize Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church. The congregation elected Thomas Reid Shannon Jr. and James Bane Miller as ruling elders. Miller was the great-grandson of James Bane Jr. and Shannon's son-in-law. Shannon was one of the county's wealthiest landowners and a legislator in the Virginia General Assembly in the 1850s. Eight of the church's eleven women founders had previously worshipped at Kimberling Presbyterian Church, as had James B. Miller.

One of the first orders of business for the young congregation was the construction of a combination church and academy building at White Gate. Construction began in the spring of 1874 and the two-story brick building was completed the same year. The church met on the ground floor and the White Gate Academy, formed in 1868, met upstairs. Shortly after completion of the building, ten church women donated five silver dollars each to be melted down and incorporated into a brass bell that was being cast for the church. The silver is said to give the bell--which hangs in the belfry of the present church--a sweet, clear tone. In the early years the congregation was almost entirely white, but in 1877 two African American women joined the church, and in 1906 a third black woman became a member. A substitute pastor during the early years was J. M. Humphreys, whose main occupation was headmaster of the academy.

By the mid-1890s, the congregation had grown to fifty-seven members with an additional forty-five non-members attending Sunday School. In April 1894 the Reverend Bolling Hobson, who preached part-time at Walker's Creek and two other Presbyterian churches in the county, convened a meeting that resulted in a decision to build a new church. Apparently a design concept had already been prepared by July 1896 when the windows for the new building were received, but actual construction did not begin until the following year. In January 1897 church members Andrew J. Bane and his wife Nannie Allen Bane donated a little over a tenth of an acre to the church trustees for the erection of the building. The membership selected elder George Lloyd Bane (another great-grandson of James Bane Jr.) to build the church; member James B. Miller donated building materials for the job; and George Bane's brother S. Henry Bane sawed the lumber at his nearby water-powered grist and saw mill on Walker's Creek. From a letter written by the Rev. Hobson in 1948 it is known that Hobson, George L. Bane, Andie Bane, and James B. Miller

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Statement of Significance (continued)

laid the stone foundation. Work began in the spring of 1897 and was completed by early fall of 1898.

The church's Ladies Aid Society was intimately involved in the design, finishing, and furnishing of the church. The Society painted the roof and walls, designed the windows, built the pews, papered the walls, and purchased the entrance doors, pulpit furnishings, carpet, stove, oil lamp fixtures, and communion set. Funds were raised through a combination of suppers, lawn festivals, hay rides, and the making and selling of quilts, rugs, and other articles. The Ladies Aid Society's importance extended beyond the period of construction. The Society raised the \$85 necessary to purchase an organ from the Montgomery Ward catalog in 1904, and in June 1906 the Society's Strawberry Festival was esteemed the social event of the season for the church and the community.

The Montgomery Ward organ came in handy for the meeting of the Montgomery Presbytery at the church in 1904. The first decade of the twentieth century was the high water mark of church membership, with a peak of eighty members, forty children in Sunday School, and twenty-three non-member Sunday School attenders in 1907. Bolling Hobson pastored at Walker's Creek and the other Giles County churches through 1911, with a brief hiatus. Hobson was followed by a succession of pastors and a decline in membership, but the church appears to have experienced something of a revival in the 1920s.

The Ladies Aid Society changed its name to the Woman's Auxiliary in 1922 but maintained its commitment to the upkeep of the church and undertook social work such as making clothes for motherless children in the area. The Woman's Auxiliary disbanded in 1934, probably due to the hardships brought on by the Great Depression, but it was reorganized in 1945 and one of its first projects was the planting of Norway spruces in the church cemetery. One acre located seventy-five yards southwest of the church had been donated for use as a cemetery in 1915.

The mid-twentieth century saw a number of changes to the physical fabric of the church. Electric service came to the valley in late 1939 and by the summer of 1940 the church was wired for electricity and the original oil lamps removed. Concrete entrance steps were poured by the men of the church in 1948. In the summer of 1953 the original lightly frosted window panes were replaced with the present brown marbled glass, and in 1955 an oil furnace was installed. The present wall boards were installed in the 1960s over the original

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Statement of Significance (continued)

plaster walls (which had been repapered in 1916). Membership remained strong through the 1950s and early 1960s but began to fall off in the late 1960s. The pastoral supply was no longer available beginning in 1997 and services were held on an irregular basis before ceasing altogether in October 2000.

Present plans are for the Presbytery of the Peaks, headquartered in Lynchburg, to officially close the church in June 2003 and to deed the property to a non-profit corporation that will be known as Walker's Creek Historical Presbyterian Church, Inc. The church will be made available for use by anyone in the valley wishing to hold services, funerals, weddings, and so forth. A special service is being planned for later in 2003 to celebrate the life and history of the church and its importance to the community over the past 130 years.

Architectural Analysis

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church is representative of the stylish frame churches built throughout Giles County during the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. The Gothic Revival Style became popular for the area's churches at the end of the nineteenth century, supplanting the Greek Revival Style of the mid-nineteenth century. The defining characteristic of the style locally was the pointed or lancet-arched window. The Walker's Creek church windows have pointed triangular tops, whereas those of other churches of the era such as the 1902 Sherry Memorial Christian Church on Salt Pond Mountain and the 1906 remodeling of the Newport Methodist Church in Newport have the true curved lancet arches. The Walker's Creek church has another feature that is something of a localism: an open bell tower belfry. Many Giles County churches have these open belfries, which are typically ornamented. The aforementioned Newport Methodist Church has one of the most decorative, with turned posts, applied sawn ornament on the faces of pilasters, and sawn brackets.

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church is also the architectural reflection of a tightly knit rural community. The Bane family is a recurrent theme in the church's physical development; a Bane gave the land for the church, a Bane milled the lumber for it, and a Bane oversaw its construction. Presumably many of the able-bodied men of the congregation participated in the building's construction, as suggested by the information on the foundation laying, and the ladies of the church were responsible for aspects of the finish work and, importantly, the design of key features such as the windows. The planned use of the building as a community center perpetuates Walker's Creek Presbyterian

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Statement of Significance (continued)

Church's long-standing connection to its community.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Giles, Leslie A., and John R. Kern. "Newport Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1993.

Kapp, Paul Hardin. "Greater Newport Rural Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1999.

Miller, W. Ernest. "History of Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church." Report, 2003.

_____. "Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church Preliminary Information Form." 2002.

Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church Records.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church nominated area is equivalent to Giles County Tax Map 74 parcel 11. The parcel contains slightly over a tenth of an acre.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated area define the historic and present parcel on which the church stands.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. 1. Subject: Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church (same for all photos)
 2. Location: Giles Co., Va. (same for all photos)
 3. Photographer: W. Ernest Miller (same for all photos)
 4. Photo date: March 2003 (same for all photos)
 5. Original negative (VDHR # 20349) archived at the Virginia Department of
Historic
 Resources, Richmond (same for all photos)
 6. Description of view: West and south elevations of church. View looking
northeast.
 7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)
2. 6. East and north elevations of church. View looking west.
3. 6. Looking through east wing of sanctuary to altar.
4. 6. South wing of sanctuary.

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Exhibit A: The Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church nominated area.

Scale: 1 inch equals approx.

Number and direction of view of exterior photographs indicated by triangular markers.